

Florida Mountain Mining Sites,
Upper Nottingham Mine
Silver City Vicinity
Owyhee County
Idaho

HAER No. ID-31-F

HAER
ID
37-SILCIV
IF-

WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
PHOTOGRAPHS

Historic American Engineering Record
National Park Service
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HISTORIC AMERICAN ENGINEERING RECORD

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FLORIDA MOUNTAIN MINING SITES, UPPER NOTTINGHAM MINE

HAER NO. ID-31-F

Location: The Upper Nottingham Mine is located on the west face of Florida Mountain and at the head of Jacobs Gulch, Owyhee County, Idaho.

Quad: USGS DeLamar Quadrangle, 7.5'
UTM coordinates: Zone 11, 519100 E,
4761750 N.

Date of Construction: ca. 1880s-1930s

Present Owner: Kinross DeLamar Mine Company

Present Use: To be demolished

Significance: The site is associated with mining activity (1880s-1930s) in southwestern Idaho. The site is associated with John F. Sullivan and Robert Noble, two local mine owners.

Report Prepared by: Susan Stacy and Elizabeth Jacox

Date: June 1995

Site Layout and Description:

The site is on the west face of the mountain and at the head of Jacobs gulch. The elevation of the approach road is near the summit of Florida Mountain. Most of the remains of the Upper Nottingham site are below the approach road, although two adits and some wood and metal debris lie above the road.

The surrounding vegetation consists of spruce and fir sagebrush and other low scrubby vegetation.

The evidence of mining activity at the site consists of two collapsed adits, prospect diggings, a rock retaining wall, milled lumber, metal pipes of several diameters, rail metal, a waste rock dump, tailings, and a (historic) road. If buildings were ever erected near the site, there is little evidence of them now. Scattered items lie near the adits, the milled lumber, and the rock dump.

The first element of the site is a collapsed adit just above the road on the left. The remains of four timbers emerge from the pile of rock covering the entrance. Sixty feet above this adit and in a westerly direction is the second collapsed adit and two prospect pits. Near these remains and nearly covered with vegetation are remnants of a galvanized bucket and a broken wooden box. The intact end of the box is about fifteen inches long and reinforced with heavy timbers on one end. smaller timbers, which may be the remains of a lid or of some sort of handle, are attached at the end of the box. closer to the adit are assorted fragments of milled timber and rusted metal.

South of the adits are two waste rock dumps. Fragments of rail, metal pipes, and timber are buried by a rock slide not too far from the junction of the two dumps; they point more or less in the direction of the road-level adit and lie down slope at a steep angle of at least 45 degrees.

The remains of a stacked rock retaining wall, which appear to support a historic road lie south of the dumps. The extant part of the wall is from five to six feet high. Much of the rock has fallen down-slope, so it is difficult to trace the precise location of the historic road.

Historic Context:

The Upper Nottingham mine, as well as the Lower Nottingham mine were part of a larger area known as the Jacobs Gulch Placer workings. The workings cover an extensive area. The upper end of the Jacobs Gulch placers were first worked during the 1860s. At the same time all of Jordan Creek was worked for ten miles from above Silver City to Wagontown.¹

Historical evidence indicates that John F. Sullivan, who came to Silver City in 1864, worked placers in the vicinity of Jacobs Gulch over a period of time from 1868 to the early 1900s. These workings include what later became known as the Tonawanda and Roosevelt placers.

A placer known as the Jacobs Gulch placer workings is mentioned in the Owyhee County index to mining claims in 1876. This placer was located "by the old sawmill on Jacobs Gulch" by A. McDonald, Samuel Strange and others in March 1876.² On December 25, 1880, John F. Sullivan transferred to William Hardiman "a piece of placer ground known as the Jacobs Gulch diggings, together with sluice boxes and other appurtenances thereto. Price \$1200."³ Newspaper

accounts from Silver City indicate that the placers in Jacobs Gulch were worked until the 1930s. It is difficult to identify the individual placer claims. They are seldom specifically named and generally known as the placers at the "head" or "lower" end of Jacobs Gulch.

John F. Sullivan was a long-time miner on Florida Mountain and worked several different claims on the mountain. Sullivan was in Jacobs Gulch as early as 1868 when he located a mine called the Dardanelles.⁴ Sullivan relocated this claim in 1878 and renamed it the Shannon.⁵

He worked the east side of Florida Mountain beginning in 1880. That year with a partner, Robert Morrison, he built a dwelling and shaft house near their Republic mine on the east side of Florida Mountain.⁶ In 1881 Sullivan bonded his undivided interest in the Republic to W. H. Dewey. He continued to locate and mine other claims on Florida Mountain in the general vicinity of Jacobs Gulch. For the next year Sullivan worked at his mine, the Paymaster, at the head of Jacobs Gulch.⁷ Although he had sold a placer claim to William Hardiman in 1880, Sullivan maintained other placer properties in Jacobs Gulch. During the same time he worked the Paymaster, he also worked his placer diggings in Jacobs Gulch, "reaping a golden harvest".⁸

Sullivan constructed several ditches to bring water to his claims. In 1868 he built one to bring water from Louse creek to his mines in Jacobs Gulch. In an interview with the Idaho Daily Statesman in 1911, Sullivan claimed the DeLamar Company was still using the ditch.⁹ He also constructed a ditch to convey water from Blue Gulch across Jacobs Gulch, and eventually extended it to Rocky Gulch.¹⁰

In 1882 Sullivan continued to work his Jacobs Gulch placer claim. He also ran a drift on a ledge he had found some years earlier in the Dardanelles. The ore was similar to the Empire State and it was thought to be the ledge that fed the Jacobs Gulch placers.¹¹ He worked this ledge for a year, and dug a shaft forty-five feet deep. The following year he leased the mine to three miners--Andy Brannan, Hank Giffin, and Pat O'Hearn. In 1884 he ran a tunnel to the strike ledge and continued to work the mine for several more years.¹²

Beginning in January 1887 and until at least 1894 Sullivan was mainly involved with his mines on the east side of Florida Mountain. He held and worked the Phillips and Sullivan mines in partnership with Isaac Phillips [see Historic Context for Phillips and Sullivan Mines]. In 1895 Sullivan dissolved his partnership with Phillips and he began to concentrate his efforts on the Jacobs Gulch claims.

In June 1896 Sullivan located the Molly Pitcher in Jacobs Gulch.¹³ He held four claims at the head of Jacobs Gulch: three that covered the old placer diggings in the gulch.¹⁴ His claims consisted of the Shannon (formerly known as the Dardanelles), the Steuben (formerly known as the Shamrock), the Paymaster and the Molly Pitcher. In July, Sullivan crosscut a tunnel to the Harrison claim, which lay east of his group. Later that year he leased his group of mines to James Stewart and others. It was reported in the March 5, 1897, issue of the Owyhee Avalanche that the lessees had several tons of ore to ship for milling.

Sullivan located another ledge at the head of Jacobs Gulch and went into partnership with Robert Noble, a well known livestock raiser, in 1901. Newspaper articles published in the Owyhee Avalanche and Silver City Nugget describe the large quantity of ore being taken from their claims. While the newspapers do not name the mines (only calling them the Sullivan and Noble properties) deed records indicate that Noble and Sullivan jointly owned the Shannon lode, which included the Blain, Harrison, Tonawanda placer and Harrison mill site, as well as the Molly Pitcher. The Owyhee Avalanche and Silver City Nugget for 1901 state that eighty tons of ore were taken from these claims. The ore was hauled to the Poorman mill for milling. The mill, which had been closed down, was reopened to process the ore from the Sullivan and Noble properties. Later that year, another strike was made on the properties farther north and higher on the mountain from the first find.¹⁵ 200 tons of ore were taken to an arrastra near Silver City for crushing in 1902. In the winter of 1903, Sullivan found the long-sought-for vein of ore in the lower tunnel of the Sullivan and Noble properties.¹⁶

That summer, Sullivan's cabin in Jacobs Gulch burned down and he rebuilt it while continuing to mine his properties.¹⁷ Deed records indicate that only Noble located the Searchlight, which bordered the Harrison on the east, in 1904.

After 1904 there is no mention of John F. Sullivan in conjunction with the claims and it is possible that he sold his interest in them to Robert Noble. Sullivan died in 1912, his obituary noting that he was a well-known mine operator in Silver City for 40 years.¹⁸

Robert Noble maintained his interest in these properties and others in Jacobs Gulch. In 1913, records show that Noble filed proofs of labor on the All Right, Crystal Glance, Ida May, King Edward, Nellie Grant, Roosevelt placer and Searchlight.

Noble died in 1915 and his heirs leased the properties. Various groups worked the claims well into the late 1920s. One of his heirs was his daughter Rozella Nottingham; hence the Shannon, the Searchlight and others became known as the "Nottingham" group of mines. Noble's heirs lost the mining properties to back taxes in the early 1930s. In 1958 Thomas Brunzell filed a location notice for the Molly Pitcher. However, no production information is available for it or the other claims that made up the Noble and Sullivan group.

The mines that eventually became known as the Lower and Upper Nottingham produced enough silver and gold that the owners worked them continuously for at least twenty years. They are examples of mines that operated without support from corporations based in California or the east.

END NOTES

1. Caldwell Tribune, October 30, 1897 page 1.
2. Owyhee County Mining Claims, Book 6, page 30.
3. "Transfers of property," Idaho Avalanche, December 25, 1880, page 3.
4. Owyhee County Mining Claims Book 6, page 345.
5. Ibid.
6. Owyhee County Mining Claims Book 6 page 548.
7. Owyhee County Mining Claims Book 6, page 608.
8. "Mining Notes," Idaho Avalanche, May 7, 1881, page 3
9. Owyhee Avalanche, January 27, 1911, page 3.
10. See several descriptions of Sullivan's mining claims in Owyhee County Mining Claims, Books 6 and 11.
11. "Mining Notes", Idaho Avalanche, November 25, 1882, page 3.
12. "Mining Mention", Idaho Avalanche, January 19, 1884 page 1.
13. Owyhee County Mining Claims Book 11, page 7. Please note that this mine was first located as the "Moly Picher" and through subsequent change in ownership identified in recent reports as the "Molly Pitcher."
14. "Mining Mention", Owyhee Avalanche, July 24, 1896 page 1.
15. Owyhee County Mining Claim Book 6, page 345.
16. Silver City Nugget, January 16, 1903 page 1.
17. "Local and Personal," Silver City Nugget, June 19, 1903, page 1.
18. "Pioneer Miner Passes Away," Idaho Statesman, November 12, 1912, page 11.

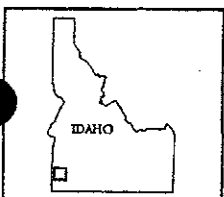
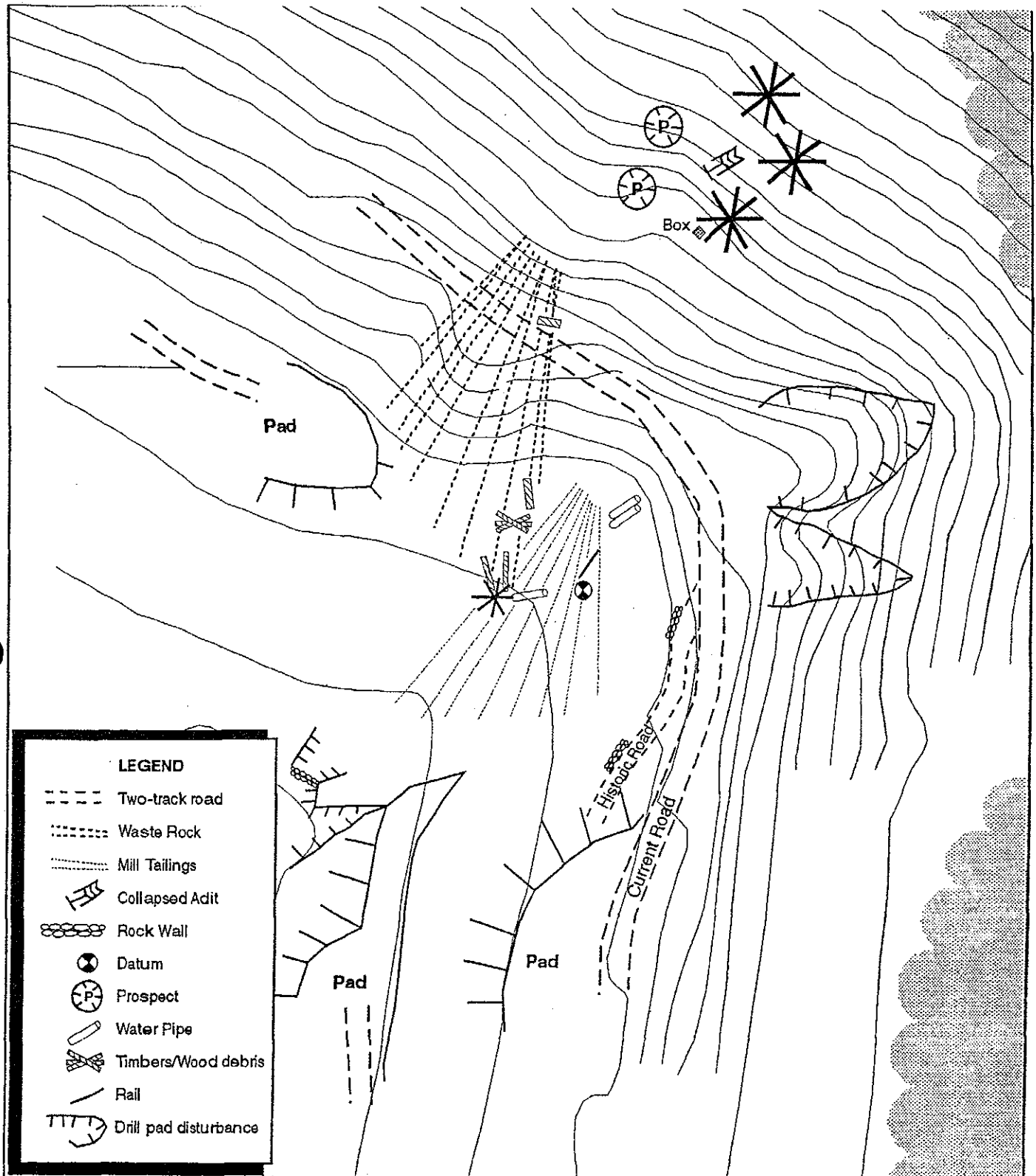


Figure 6-35
 UPPER NOTTINGHAM MINE
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